United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1196
3 August 1992

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ United Nations observer team, deployed throughout South Africa, today witnessed first day of mass demonstrations organized by African National Congress.

+ More than 4.3 million voters registered for Angolan elections in September; Secretary-General's Special Representative calls Angolan response an "unequivocal evidence" of desire for peace and democracy.

+ Number of flights in United Nations humanitarian airlift to Sarajevo reaches 500.

+ President of Bosnia and Herzegovina requests Security Council to immediately pass resolution clarifying intent of arms embargo on Yugoslavia adopted in September 1991.

+ Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali welcomes cease-fire agreement between Government of Rwanda and Rwandan Patriotic Front, in effect since 31 July.

+ Talks between Secretary-General and leaders of the two communities in Cyprus continue this week, in pursuit of overall agreement on integrated State.

+ United Nations guard in Baghdad shot at by unknown assailant.

+ Economic and Social Development Council suspends 1992 substantive session, with emphasis on sustainable development and revitalization of its own structure.

+ Egypt to host International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in September 1994.

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The ten members of the United Nations observer team, deployed throughout South Africa yesterday, were witness today to the first day of mass demonstrations organized by the African National Congress (ANC).

Seven team members flew into Johannesburg yesterday, and joined the three colleagues who were already in the country, including the group leader, Hisham Omayad of Ghana. They were briefed on their assignments before being dispatched to nine different locations.

The group, whose presence was requested by the ANC and approved by the South African Government, is working closely with the National Peace Secretariat, a non-partisan local organization which emerged from the signing of the National Peace Accords. The observers are scheduled to be in South Africa for a week, but the exact date of their depar ure will be decided in consultation with the Peace Secretariat.

In a separate development, the Secretary-General's Special Representative to South Africa, Cyrus Vance, returned to New York today, following a two-week visit to that country. He is expected to report to the Secretary-General on his recommendations for steps that can be taken to help halt the violence in South Africa, and bring about the resumption of negotiations.

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At 31 July, more than 4.3 million voters had been registered for the Angolan elections scheduled for 29 and 30 September, as compared with a target of 4 million earlier set for that date. About one million more eligible voters remain to be registered. In order to accomodate them, the period of registration was extended to 10 August, according to the National Electoral Council of Angola.

In a press communiqué dated 3 August, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Angola, Margaret J. Anstee, also praised the achievements of the registration exercise, describing them as quite remarkable given the "enormous constraints of transport, communication and other vital logistical support in a country ravaged by 30 years of continuous strife".

According to her, the achievements were unequivocal evidence of the determination of the Angolan people "to opt for peace and democracy, and of the enthusiastic support of the whole population for the electoral process, as well as of the calming presence of the United Nations observers".

Moreover, continued Ms. Anstee, the fact that 13 Presidential candidates had been nominated, and 24 political parties established, demonstrated that Angola was well on the way to multi-party democracy.

However, the Special Representative cautioned that during the next few critical weeks, the continued support and interest of the international community will be "of vital importance". A relatively modest effort now could

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preempt many future problems that might otherwise arise, and not only consolidate the future of Angola, but also make a signal contribution to the stability and progress of the whole region of Southern Africa.

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The number of sorties flown in the United Nations humanitarian airlift to the besieged city of Sarajevo reached 500 on Sunday.

In a press release issued 2 August, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) also indicated that the 500th sortie had been completed yesterday by a French plane. A total of 18 nations have participated in the emergency airlift, which is being coordinated jointly by the UNHCR and the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR).

Since it began on 3 July, the airlift has delivered more than 6,200 metric tons of food, medical and other relief supplies for the estimated 450,000 people trapped in and around Srajevo.

For the High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, the airlift demonstrated the determination of the international community to help the innocent victims of the war. "For the residents of Sarajevo, the airlift is much more than a symbolic humanitarian gesture", she said. "It is an act of solidarity to try to save the people of Sarajevo from destruction".

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Citing its "legal and moral obligation to protect all of its citizens against foreign aggression", the President of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Alija Izetbegovic, requested in a letter dated 29 July that the Security Council immediately pass a resolution "in order to clarify its intent when imposing an arms embargo on Yugoslavia in September 1991".

In the letter addressed to the President of the Council, Mr. Izetbegovic contends that the arms embargo imposed on his country "is creating a power vacuum in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which could become detrimental to the survival of the democratically elected Government". Article 51 of the United Nations Charter grants every Member "the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member...", observed the Bosnian President.

"Without arms for Sarajevo "the balance of power remains skewed, and genocide continues", says the letter. "The Belgrade regime and its surrogates have no incentive to negotiate honestly since the balance of power is so strongly in their favour".

The Bosnian President ends his request by saying that if the Security Council "is not in a position to implement the measures necessary for the protection of a Member State faced with an outside armed attack, it should not

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obstruct that Member State in providing for its self-defense".

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has welcomed the formal cease-fire agreement between the Government of Rwanda and the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) which came into effect at midnight on 31 July. Representatives of the two parties reached the agreement - which contains provision for the deployment of observers from Member States of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) - in Arusha, Tanzania, on 14 July.

In a statement, Friday, Mr. Boutros-Ghali noted "the constructive approach taken at the regional level and the important outcome it helped produce". He also said he was pleased to learn that Member States of the United Nations had expressed willingness to provide logistical support to facilitate the implementation of the agreement.

The Secretary-General reiterated his support for efforts to resolve the conflict and called on the parties to comply fully with the provisions of the agreement in order to facilitate negotiations leading to the signing of peace accords.

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Talks between the Secretary-General and leaders of the two communities in Cyprus, which resumed on 15 July, are set to continue during this week. He met this morning with Rauf Denktash, leader of the Turkish Cypriot community, and this afternoon with President George Vassiliou of Cyprus.

The objective of the talks is to reach an agreement on a set of ideas for an overall agreement on Cyprus as an integrated whole. In this context, the talks this week will concern the issues of territory and displaced persons.

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A Czech member of the United Nations Guard was shot at early on Sunday morning in the parking lot of the Palestine Hotel in Baghdad, according to statement made by a United Nations Spokeswoman at headquarters today. The soldier, Vanek Stanislav, was not injured, and a letter of protest had been sent to the Foreign Ministry in Iraq.

There have been a series of attacks on United Nations guards in the past few weeks, including the fatal shooting of a Fijian soldier in northern Iraq. The Memorandum of Agreement between the Organization and the Iraqi Government, covering the presence of the Guard, expired a month ago and has not yet been renewed.

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The work accomplished during the current session of the Economic and Social Development Council should make it one of the most productive in recent

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years, the Council was told on Friday by Ji Chaozhu, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Development. In a closing statement delivered as the Council suspended its 1992 substantive session, he said that future peace, security and global stability depended on the world's collective ability to improve the living standards everywhere. The Council had considered many proposals for its own revitalization, but key to its thrust was the issue of poverty-eradication, achieved through sustainable development.

Winding up the current session, the Council took action on a number of issues including decolonization, the development of energy resources of developing countries, promotion of the goals of rural women, regional cooperation, access to United Nations information systems, and the establishment of the Council's new subsidiary bodies.

On decolonization, the Council adopted a text urging increased support for the opponents to apartheid in South Africa and the use of concerted and effective measures to ensure its speedy end. Seeking increased assistance to the Palestinian people, it also called for immediate lifting of Israeli restrictions on the implementation of aid projects by the United Nations Development Programme and other United Nations bodies.

Among other texts on development adopted on Friday was one reaffirming that an adequate flow of resources was needed to help developing countries finance the exploration and development of their own energy resoures.

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Egypt will host the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo from 5 to 13 September 1994. As host country, Egypt will be responsible for providing premises and facilities for the Conference as well as funding the travel of United Nations staff and the Conference support costs.

Dr. Nafis Sadik, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Executive Director and the Secretary-General of the forthcoming Conference, has expressed gratification to the Egyptian Government, whose offer to host the Conference was approved on 30 July by the Economic and Social Council. According to Dr. Sadik, the 1994 Conference will give the world's Governments an opportunity "to review the many links between population and development and to establish a specific agenda for effective action in the twenty-first century."

The overall theme of the 1994 Conference will be population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development. To that end, the Conference will update and consolidate the World Population Plan of Action, as well as the recommendations adopted at the International Conference on Population in Mexico City in 1984. In addition, Dr. Sadik has also stated that the population and development recommendations contained in Agenda 21 of the recently concluded United Nations Conference on Environment and Development would also be reviewed by the 1994 Conference.

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